

Wildlife Preservation Fund: Policies and Procedures

Background:

The Wildlife Preservation Fund was established by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners on August 25, 1998. These Wildlife Preservation Fund Policies and Procedures is designed to establish a methodology whereby staff may distribute the funds collected as part of the newly established Wildlife Preservation Fund. The Wildlife Preservation Fund receives 50% of all funds collected as assessed for the cost of mitigating not replanting trees required under the Environmental Management Act generated as a result of permit replanting requirements which could not reasonably be placed on site [Section 10-294(b)(3)] or were donated to the County as part of a plan for mitigating one or more violations of the Environmental Management Act..

Authorization for the "Wildlife Preservation Fund" is provided for in Leon County Code of Laws, Section 10-294(b)(3), *Off-Site Replanting Agreements*, and states:

"If the total number of trees to be replanted based on the tree replanting schedule in subsection (b)(1), exceeds that which may be reasonably planted on the development site, the applicant may enter into an agreement with the County, as approved by the director, to plant the excess trees on an approved public site or to provide the monetary equivalent to the County for use in public landscaping projects; and which may, upon proper application, be provided to organizations for the purpose of wildlife protection and preservation."

General Guidelines:

The Wildlife Preservation Fund has been designated by the Board of County Commissioners, BOCC, as a funding source for wildlife preservation efforts. Priority status has been assigned to wildlife rehabilitation efforts. Subsequent wildlife preservation efforts which may request funding will be directed to wildlife habitat enhancement. Additional guidelines will be added in order to prioritize the funding requests received by the Community Development Department. Generally, the guidelines are as follows;

1. Withdrawals are for the purpose of promoting wildlife preservation with priority being given to the rehabilitation and release of injured and displaced wildlife and secondarily to efforts related to the provision of enhanced wildlife habitat.
2. Wildlife Preservation Requests are limited to the available fund balance for any given fiscal year.
3. Wildlife Preservation Withdrawal Requests are limited to one per agency per year.
4. Projects which serve a larger number of native/migratory wildlife will be given higher priority than those which serve fewer native/migratory wildlife.

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5. Projects shall provide management and care standards consistent current wildlife rehabilitation permit requirements and standards as issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.
6. Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Requests shall be directed to the management and restoration of high quality natural areas or sites with potentially high value for wildlife habitat.
 - a. Management of remnant natural areas of highest quality.
 - b. Healing damaged natural areas and expanding the flora and fauna through ecological restoration and/or management.
7. In the provision of wildlife habitat, the use of appropriate native species is encouraged, and they are to be located on approved sites. An approved site is defined as:
 - a. Publicly owned property
 - b. Property owned by a private not-for-profit organization on which wildlife preservation efforts will provide a documented, substantial public benefit
 - c. Private property on which wildlife preservation efforts will provide a documented and substantial public benefit

The methodology for distribution of funds has been developed which will minimize staff time in reviewing and processing withdrawal requests and provide an effective expenditure of county funds. Funds shall be distributed on an annual basis and it will retain a minimum balance of \$1000. All requests for monies from this fund shall be submitted to Director of Community Development or his designee by August 1, of each fiscal year. Designated staff within the Community Development Department will examine, review, prioritize and recommend the allocation of funds to the Director.

- Wildlife Withdrawal Requests will be submitted on August 1 and actual reimbursement funds will be distributed by September 30.
- Funding of Wildlife Withdrawal Requests for wildlife rehabilitation will be directed to the reimbursement of approved expenses incurred during the previous 12 months prior to the submittal date and according to the established criteria.
- Funding of Wildlife Withdrawal Requests for wildlife habitat enhancement will be designated to cover the costs of approved purchases to an identified vendor.
- When determined to be complete, all requests received by August 1, will be reviewed and recommendations made to the director within twenty (20) working days. The request may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied within ten (10) working days from receipt by the Director.
- Appeals of the Director's decision must be filed within ten (10) working days to the County Administrator for review. The County Administrator's decision shall be final.

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Withdrawal Procedures:

1. The person or agency interested in using proceeds deposited in the Wildlife Preservation Fund shall file a request using the Wildlife Preservation Fund Request Form (see attached).
- 2.A. The wildlife rehabilitation request shall include:
 - a. Applicant name, phone number, address
If agency or organization;
 - 1) Purpose statement
 - 2) Organizational goals
 - 3) History of agency or organization
 - b. Name, phone number and address of representative of the applicant.
 - c. Wildlife rehabilitators seeking funding for expenses must possess and provide copies of current wildlife rehabilitation permits from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.
 - d. Copy of preceding year's annual Wildlife Rehabilitation Reports to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.
 - e. Request amount, description and narrative of expenditures to be reimbursed.
 - Wildlife Food (bird of prey diet, fish, seed, milk replacers, etc.)
 - Medical Expenses (costs; veterinary services and medications)
 - Rescue Equipment (nets, traps, catch poles, gloves, etc.)
 - Hospital Supplies (syringes, bandages, towels and lab equipment)
 - Caging (hospital cages, food and water dishes)(attached expenditure receipts and any additional records documenting service provision).
 - f. Total number of native/migratory wildlife treated (picked up within Leon County jurisdiction).
 - g. Total number of native/migratory wildlife released (picked up within Leon County jurisdiction).
 - h. Release protocol (hard vs. soft).
 - i. Protocol for selection of release sites.

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2.B. The wildlife habitat enhancement request shall include:

- a. Applicant name, phone number, address
If agency or organization;
 - 1) Purpose statement
 - 2) Organizational goals
 - 3) History of agency or organization
- b. Name, phone number and address of representative of the applicant.
- c. Description of the public benefits of the proposed project.
- d. Location and description of site(s) and targeted translocation species.
Signed letter(s) of consent from landowner(s) whose properties will be involved in habitat restorations, whether as donor or recipient site(s). In each case, written agreements among parties shall be executed as specified in these guidelines.
- e. Description of the scope of the project and costs of materials required by applicant (provide formal documentation from material or service supplier).
- f. Wildlife habitat enhancement plan, including goals and objectives for characteristics of enhanced habitat, targeted species, number of targeted species present and the proposed carrying capacity of the enhanced habitat area.
- g. Description and size of area to be improved relative to the size of the property controlled by the applicant with a description of the surrounding habitats, within and beyond the control of the applicant.
- i. Identify any potential targeted or coattail species which have the potential to become nuisances to people or other wildlife.
- j. Identify any maintenance practices which could potentially cause conflicts with surrounding land uses (such as prescribed burns).
- k. Description, plan, and responsible entity for insuring proper care and maintenance of wildlife habitat planting material for one (1) year or a longer length of time considered critical for the survival of the plant material.